organised to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Indo-Turkish Cultural Agreement signed during the visit" of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to Turky in 1951.

Indo-British Discussion Group

An Indo-British Discussion Group was organised from 6—9 January 1992 at the India International Centre on the theme "Ethnicity, Nationality and Sovereignty". About 12 participants from Britain and 12 participants from India took part in the discussion. The Council provided local hospitality to the foreign participants.

Baba Saheb Ambedkar Birth Centenary Lectures

At the invitation of ICCR, Prof. Marc Galantcr of the University of Wisconsin and Prof. (Ms.) Eleanor Zclliot of Carleton College, Minnesoto, USA delivered the lectures as part of the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar from the period March 5 to 19, 1992 and March 14 to 23, 1992 respectively in various cities of India viz. Madras, Nagpur, Bombay, Mhow, Lucknow. The lectures were arranged in collaboration with the Ministrv of Welfare.

Symposium of Translators

The Council sponsored Dr. Amrendra Misra, Assistant Editor in the Council to participate in the Symposium of Translators organised by Vernamala, a Socio-Cultural Voluntary Society in Bhubaneswar on 14-15 March 1992.

Safeguarding Interests of Persons of Indian Origin in Fiji

4381. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Diplomatic Missions in Fiji had to be closed down in June, 1990, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) what steps the Government of India have taken till date to safeguards the interests of people of Indian origin in Fiji?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes Sir. The authorities in Fiji asked India on May 23, 1990, to close down its mission in Suya.

(b) The Government of India believes that restoration-of democracy and racial harmony in Fiji is the *sine qua* non of ensuring the welfare of the people of Indian origin in that country. Accordingly, the ■ Government has vigorously pursued these concerns at international organisations and at a bilateral level with countries such as Australia, New Zealand, France, UK, USA and Mauritius.

Formation of Islamic Block

4382. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Turkey, Iran and Pakistan as part of more stringent fundamentalism have revived .the moribund Regional Cooperation for Development Organisation and delegations from the three countries met in Tehran recently to put life into the inactive group under the new title Economic Cooperation Organisation;

(b) whether the three Islamic republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union—Azerbaijan, Uzbckhistan and Turkmenistan also attended the above meeting apart from two other Central Asian republics sent observers;

(c) whether this meeting also evolved the concept of an Islamic common market;

(d) whether India has studied the implications of this proposal not only from point of view of its purely commercial and economic motivation but also from the point of view of emergence of an Islamic Block; and

(e) if so, what is Government reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) In 1985, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey set up the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO). At its first Summit meeting in Tehran on 16-17 February 1992, apart from these three countries. Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan,